The COMMONWEAL

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O WISDOM! that proceedest from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end mightily, and sweetly disposing all things: come and teach us the way of prudence.

O Adonai, and leader of the house of Israel! who appearedst to Moses in the fire of the flaming bush, and gavest him the law on Sinai: come and redeem us by thy outstretched arm.

O Root of Jesse! who standest as the ensign of the people; before whom kings shall not open their lips; to whom the nations shall pray: come and deliver us; tarry now no more.

O Key of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel! who openest, and no man shutteth; who shuttest, and no man openeth: come and lead the captive from prison, sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O Orient! splendor of eternal light, and Sun of Justice! come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O King of nations and their Desired One, and the Corner-Stone that makest both one: come and save man whom thou formedst out of slime.

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the Expectation and Savior of the nations! come and save us, O Lord our God!

* * *

Shortly after midnight, in the first hour of Christmas Day, in Bethlehem, in Vatican City, in London and Berlin, in Africa, Asia and Australia, in Europe and in the Americas, the priest, after begging forgiveness for his sins and the sins of the people, will mount the steps of the altar, proceed to the right of the altar, and begin intoning the Introit for the First Christmas Mass: "The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee."

For the Sacrifice of American Exclusivism

A Needed Discipline

DISCIPLINE and sacrifice, it is agreed with a unanimity surprising for a sceptical and indulgent nation, are necessary to build freedom and protect this country. What discipline and what sacrifice? Most important is the personal asceticism of Christian morality and theology, a method and path to worship and charity handed down by the saints—the hair shirt of Thomas More, chancellor of England; the fasting and utter poverty of Nicholas of Flüe, the guide of Swiss union and defense; the long and humble night watches of Louis, King of France. A really happy land and a just land can be created and maintained only on the foundation of such personal virtues, which is a very hard fact, but an affirmation which is simple to understand.

The discipline and sacrifice which the country needs and wants are also, certainly, social or communal virtues. Gradually we should define these social qualities with increasing clarity. Right now there is talk especially about taxes, which constitute a sacrifice for those who pay them, and, of course, everybody does. The country diverts its production from pleasantly usable or expendable commodities to weapons of defense and the upkeep of defenders. Men sacrifice their favorite activity and extravagance to army training and armaments. To do it with a will requires discipline.

A sacrifice for which THE COMMONWEAL reiterates the need is America's exclusivism, which tends toward that of the unwholesome dog in the manger. It is agreed that a country of some long standing and traditions, such as the US, has a right to develop its own variety of human culture and protect it from uncontrolled cultural hybridization, from erosion and from smothering. But this is a limited right; it does not wipe out the duty of a country to support its share of the human race and to enjoy its resources justly with the rest of mankind. Beyond justice there is the compulsion of charity to feed and clothe and shelter persons with nothing of their own. The Immigration Acts on our statute books, which can hardly be defended ever, furnish no policy at all for this period of uprooted nations. The federal government has manipulated its executive procedure to

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decrease the mechanical harshness of laws and regulations and has benefited thousands of hounded Europeans, but we have certainly not gone far enough—or far at all. Coordinating quotas and character clearances and transport and affidavits has grown more and more difficult, until now there is simply too much fiction and absurdity and expense and red tape in the exhausting process of getting a foreigner or refugee safe in the US. It requires the patience of the Chinese, the finances of the Rockefellers, the determination of the British and the organizing ability of the Germans to make everything come out right. Basic to the difficulties and to the smallness of our help is, undoubtedly, a reluctance of Americans to open up this country to those who need it. We hope this issue can be beaten out in public and in Washington. We hope this reluctance can be transformed into eagerness: an eagerness to bring people into the US, restrained only at length and reluctantly by the need to maintain here a culture integrated enough within itself to give the best chance for its flowering and to continue furnishing the world with a place and community where those without home will want to come.

The Carnegie Corporation Reports

THE CURRENT annual report just released by the Carnegie Corporation's president, Dr. Frederick P. Keppel, contributes some characteristically stimulating matter. Explaining the last disbursements, of four and a half millions, Dr. Keppel takes occasion to describe the long-view attitude which is possible to the great foundations even "in the face of falling incomes and increasing calls." However, the problem of selecting the most deserving beneficiaries for its grants is complicated, in Dr. Keppel's view, by the fact that 'there are in the United States far more universities, colleges and other operating institutions, and far more voluntary organizations for worthy purposes, than the nation can possibly afford." This has been said before, though not always so plainly or with such competence for judgment behind the statement; an educational foundation receiving manyfold the demands it can answer is a clearing house for information which organizes itself more slowly elsewhere. The words make peculiarly hard reading from the very fact that has brought the condition about—the addiction to education which is one of the American national passions. Yet we are forced to accept the truth that our educational product is very far from perfect. The numerous and complex reasons for this, the deficiencies in methods and ideals, cover a very large field, with many institutions in it about which no economic question can be raised. But beyond doubt there is a separate problem of the mere multiplicity of seats of learning. The system has expanded under other forces besides the pressure of natural growth. In the slow and painful process of educational improvement that faces us, some of these institutions will inevitably go under, as Dr. Keppel says. It is the business of both the foundations and the educated public to ensure that those, large or small, old or new, which have true quality are the ones which the nation will "afford."

Too Many Colleges

More Than Enough for Popeye

THE Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation's plan for making available to families on relief certain products of which there is an over-supply has turned into a far broader effort than would have appeared at the outset, and one pregnant with good for the welfare of Americans. By clever advertising and merchandising and by linking up its plan with "national defense," the FSCC has induced not only stamp holders but people generally to increase their consumption of surplus commodities. The increased demand for these in regular trade would even seem to exceed the amount bought with relief stamps. On the present long list there appear, of course, foods which are no strangers (except by duress) to the run of American dinner tables: butter, pork, eggs, flour, potatoes, onions. But there appear also protective goods a wider consumption of which would be more than desirable: fresh oranges, apples, pears, grapefruit, cabbage, spinach (!), as well as dried prunes and raisins. The stamp plan not only puts such things within reach of the destitute (for which the taxpayer foots the bills); it also greatly increases general, commercial demand for them, thus building up the farmer's domestic market and the physical well-being of the nation. Out of evils—agricultural surplusses and unemployment—comes a scheme to effect what many a dietician has dreamed.

Spinach and Prunes

Labor and National Unity

IT WAS to be foreseen that even serious people would call to memory at this time the French social reforms under the Blum government, link those reforms to the failure of French production for defense, and proclaim that our national emergency program must be freed from such impediments. Here there is a question of doctrine and one of fact. To our mind the doctrine is well stated by the President and by Secretary of Labor Perkins. In his message, sent from a battleship in the Caribbean to the Economic Club of New York, the President said: "It is only by keeping our economy socially conscious that we can keep it free." At the Seventh National Conference on Labor Legislation, the Secretary of Labor said: "The security of a nation

The French Example

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depends not only on its physical defenses but on the well-being of its people. Anything that contributes to greater health and safety, to proper working conditions and to more adequate standards of living contributes to national defense." The point clearly is that unless the effort to increase production is accompanied by a vigilant determination to match that effort with persistent justice in the realm of labor relations, we will have an unbalanced social structure unable to count for defense on the unanimous will of all its classes.

There remains the question of the facts in France and the danger of over-simplifying the French example. Without doubt the 40 hour week law was too rigidly applied and caused inconvenience and disorder in production. But it should not be forgotten that there were industrialists who refused all social legislation and all collaboration with a government intent on effecting it. The responsibility of the technical services of the government, in giving industry an ill-regulated program for the material needed also is involved. Analysis of the French failure in preparedness shows many other political and economic factors at work: it does not show that an attempted exploitation of labor under cover of national defense would or could have been a successful operation. We are glad that the Administration shows no signs of accepting the supposed parallelism of the French example.

Housing and the Defense Program

THERE IS no blinking the vast housing needs manifested by the gigantic defense program. Meeting them is as much of a challenge to the nation as the production of vast quantities of guns and planes. Indeed, housing is an integral element of national productive capacity. Moreover, the Twentieth Century Fund reports that half the women the government sought to place in strategic plants in the last war refused because of inadequate facilities to house them. Of the suggested solutions to the problem, the trailer camp is at first sight most streamline, if not amusing. If retired couples can use them to trek to Florida, why not workers' families? When peace comes and the plant shuts down, they can move away leaving a trailer park with tin cans that can easily be disposed of. But even if trailer production could be stepped up many times and supply this demand, how could such communities be considered healthy for normal family life? Would they not also tend to create a new class of migratory workers? The flimsy shacks like many of the last war, with their inadequate protection immediately and their distress area potentialities come peace, are obviously no happy solution. What remains is the production of permanent-type houses. Decent living conditions require them. But they are no solution if all enterprise moves out of the neighborhood when a new armistice is signed. All this points to the need of placing defense orders in industrial areas where housing facilities already exist or of confining the isolation of plants to industries or factories that can turn to marketable products in peacetime. Here is a new headache for decentralists. Handled properly, however, the defense building program can be positive and creative.

Shacks, Trailers or Real Houses

After Most Careful Consideration

LORD LOTHIAN'S statement, that "under present conditions" his Government is "not able to give permission for the passage of food through the blockade," closes the door upon any hope that a plan like Mr. Hoover's, predicated as it is on obtaining England's consent, can for the moment be carried further. It is of course heartening that "His Majesty's Government are at all times prepared to facilitate the passage through the blockade of medical supplies destined for distribution in territories occupied by Germany and in unoccupied France by approved bodies." The British thesis is that ultimate responsibility for any shortages rests with Germany, and this is a thesis impossible to dismiss. Yet even supposing the thesis true, does it in fact clear England of *all* responsibility for what may happen? The British line is that "the risk of starvation has been greatly exaggerated," a line which only the event can prove and a line which, if true, rather weakens their general argument.

The British Answer

Meanwhile Cardinal O'Connell, with terrible emphasis, called the Hoover plan "noble and Christian." His Eminence is one of a great number of prominent men and women who have given adherence to a National Committee on Food for the Five Small Democracies. Other committees, one of 25 leading women and another of 44 distinguished Catholic laymen, opposed any attempt to weaken the blockade, the latter describing such an attempt as "contrary to the best interests of Christianity." Lord Lothian's statement did not talk of Christianity; it expressed "deepest sympathy with the Allied peoples," it pointed to the risks England herself is suffering "in the fight for freedom not only for herself but for all freedom-loving peoples"; it was a compelling plea for sympathy and support for the British attitude. Yet we still question whether that attitude is thoroughly realistic. As the New York *Times* put it, "It would be a bitter awakening for Great Britain if, after all her sacrifices, she were to win the war and discover that the democratic peoples of the Continent had been alienated." Which is tantamount to saying that perhaps Hitler may lose, but his revolution win. Happily there is evidence that some Englishmen are aware of this.

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The Mystery

Not the bright mystery
That skyward lifts us, cleansing us with fire,
Is this—the insoluble Iniquity,
Born of the dark, the mire.

Because our hearts of dust
Remember Eden in pathetic dream,
Justice alone is normal, though unjust
Be life's distorted scheme.

Not solely general ill
Awakes our protest. But anomalous
We deem our private sins, confounded still
By evil barbed in us.

Dear is the earth: not this,
God's candid garment, hides satanic wings.
Bewildering from the bottomless abyss
The searing talon springs.

Bitter beatitude
Is ours who cry, "But why does heaven permit
These wrongs!" His image we, that God is good
We postulate in it.

Therefore we battle on
In desperate faith and angry valiancy.
Final were evil's triumph, all hope gone,
Were it not mystery.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

In the Stable

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib."—Isaias, i. 3.

The shepherds prayed, the little ass brayed;
And the Baby thought it gallant,
For when He gurgled with delight,
The ass grinned at His talent.

Mother and Shepherds the Baby loved—
He gave His life to save them—
But He who made the ox and ass
Admired the voice He gave them.

GILES STAAB.

Prayer for the Night

(Written Beforehand)

Be close. Be in me. Hush the day's last cries
That tangle in my ear,
Put out the light that glitters in my eyes:
The Night is here.

Quiet my hands restless and quivering,
Quench the last tear I weep,
Dismiss my voice, blow out my breath, and sing
My heart to sleep.

SISTER MARY ST. VIRGINIA.

Advice to Be Ignored

Let any who seek to destroy us try to catch up with the slow small places
where the Borders between time and the timeless go unguarded.

The town clock went off duty between 12 and 1 A.M.
refusing to goose-step through the midsummer night.
"It is an old clock and it gets out of order,"
people said, "but it is a nice clock. We like it."

Only on Sunday mornings, the hour Time-for-Church
is caroled from four steeples. The hills roundabout
are reverent with bells, and soon with hymns.
When the organ begins, everyone is at ease in the pews.

One week-day hour is marked, the Band Concert.
Boys and girls stroll arm in arm
where cars curve watchfully not to tread on darting children.
All up and down the street summer people
and year-long people applaud with auto horns
but while there is music hardly anybody talks.
"A solemn little concert!" said the city visitor.
Rather, a contented concert where people remember how to listen.
From his grandmother's lap a Raphael infant cries, "More, More!"
swaying in affinity with the music.
In opened windows of the old brick jail
the few prisoners gather behind scarcely essential bars.
One runs up and down the bars on all fours in monkey rhythms,
but the others are a quiet part of the listening community.

A clock-mender from the city climbed the Tower to mend Time.
He set the hands back on Standard but even after that
the bell loitered along an hour and ten minutes behind the hands.
Stores opened out of courtesy to people who wanted to buy things.
A pilot took out his excursion boat for a single passenger,
"Because we advertise it for this hour, and one person wants to see the harbor as much as fifty."
He turned back to pick up a second, late arrival
because the second person wanted to go as much as the first.
These events lacked external pressures.

Let any who meditate dropping bombs on steel and cement centers
go instead to hamlets in hills or plains, East-west, North-south.
Panting, seek out men and women untyrannized by hours
and murder little towns that open the windows of prisoners
to communal music in twilight shining through mid-summer trees.

RUTH EVELYN HENDERSON.

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Christmas 1940

By C. G. Paulding

THE TRAINS run on Christmas Eve, and always at Midnight Mass, in the Hudson Valley, a train would thunder through the cut where the tracks passed near the church and the windows in the church would rattle and the choir would be singing but you would hear nothing but the weight of the train passing and the wheels clicking where the rails are joined. But the trains were not disturbing to us, for in America the sound of trains at night in the country is an integral part of the sounds of night and I remember the whistle in the distance, and then the bell, and then the roar of the trains passing the church while we were at Midnight Mass, just as I remember the sleigh waiting at the door of the house and the sound of its runners cutting into the hard snow when we got into it behind the two white horses. We drove slowly down a long steep hill and after Mass we came back slowly up the hill, so that the ride was not so good a ride as many others we took in winter but it was the only sleigh ride we ever took at midnight and the purpose for which we took it makes it seem now the only sleigh ride to remember. The church was right by the river, the dark river, and there seemed to be more light than there was in all the world concentrated in the church at Midnight Mass, but outside there was the dark river and the dark mountains across the river, and the silence. The great river has been flowing past the church for many years now, the trains still pass the church, but the church now is empty; its colonnade faces the river, the wind blows through the open doors, the floor has fallen in, and when you stand in the door you see the rock on which the church was built. The windows are broken. The path to the church is hard to follow through the sumac and the weeds. There is a new church now far from the river, up the hill, in a central street of the village.

We remember the Christmas of our childhood because, for all we knew then, there was in all the world nothing but happiness. There was the family and it was very natural to think of the other family in Bethlehem. There was kindness everywhere that we could see and it was natural that some of this kindness should pass through us until the coachman and the people in the church and the white horses that drew the sleigh and the Italian children in the benches in the church and the animals in the fields seemed all united and participating in our joy and love. The whole village, the family, nature itself, and our young hearts, were naturally and totally involved in the adoration of the Child. We thought it natural that the ass and the ox should be there at the crib, and that the Kings should be on their way, and the shepherds near. We never thought of the loneliness and we could not think, for we were children, of the lonely family in Bethlehem. All our village was there at the midnight Mass and of what separated the people of our village during the days of the years we could have no knowledge. We could not remember that the villagers of Bethlehem had not been there at the crib and that the barn there had been the loneliest place in eternity. We thought that the joy of Christmas was always shared.

* * *

There were lighted candles in the windows of all the houses in the Boston streets of Beacon Hill. People came from other sections of the city to walk up and down the streets of the Hill and look at the wreaths in the lighted windows. Carols were sung in the streets. There were bright open fires in many of the old houses, there was snow on the trees in the streets and snow piled up along the sidewalks. All the windows were bright: the families were all gathered inside the houses. But there were many people in the streets who were strangers and who were not invited within. So that there were the carols, the lights, the snow, and all these things meant Christmas, but many, who came to look, left the Hill with a new loneliness that these things had caused. It is not the closed, darkened house that excludes the lonely: it is the house brightly lighted that shuts them out. We can measure unhappiness in the light of Christmas. From childhood on each year we stand against the light of Christmas and cast deeper shadows—impenetrable to the light.

* * *

All seven children came into the room one after another, Gonzalo and Maribel, Carlos and Susana, Paco, Jorge and Alvaro. All the lights had been turned out in the room and we had lighted candles at the crib. The fireplace gave a warm light and the shadows moved among the wooden rafters. The children stood before the crib and looked at it and no one said anything. Behind the crib was a Christmas tree and after we had stood looking at the crib, with no one moving nor saying

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any word, we lighted all the candles on the tree and the sparklers gave a white dazzling light and there was a silver star at the top of the tree. Beneath the tree were presents wrapped in white paper. But the children did not move forward to the presents. After we had lighted the tree the children stood looking at the crib and at the tree. I do not know whether they felt joy or whether their sorrow was very great. I do not know what their Christmas had been the year before in Madrid. I do not know what dark sorrow was opposed to this light. Abruptly insecure, suddenly destitute, they knew what Christmas had meant to them before and now they looked at the little clay figures and perhaps they knew better than any of us what Christmas meant eternally. They were in exile as the family in Bethlehem had been in exile, and for them too the only consolation was in the Child. They stood there and looked at the lighted figures round the crib and they brought there as their only gifts the hunger, the fear, the loneliness and the humiliations of the long journey they had taken into exile. That was before France fell. That Christmas the seven children were together with their parents. This Christmas they are all dispersed no one knows where.

Christmas is the silence of the world. There is nothing whatever to be done. The world is a silent star in the whirling cold immensities of space. There is no use in building a house. We are alone, impermanent, lost in the silent space. If this were not true, if everything in this world could easily or in time become satisfactory, then there need never have been a first Christmas day in Bethlehem.

* * *

People carry bundles in the busses and in the subway. There is a Christmas tree in Greeley Square, a Christmas tree in Washington Square. Arrangements have been made for carols. There are bright ribbons round the Virginia hams in butcher shops. There are piles of oranges and mandarins and grapes. Whisky, candy, cigars, novels, toy pistols, toy tanks, are wrapped for seasonal merchandising. The windows on Fifth Avenue acknowledge Christmas. The stores and the factories stay open late. With avidity for profit, with pity for the poor, and immeasurable friendliness toward one another, with inexorable insistence that the work get done, we accept the memory of the night in Bethlehem.

Second Floor. Ladies Lingerie, Kitchen Utensils, Games. Is there anyone for it? Negroes are allowed to run the elevator in this store. Fourth Floor. Christmas Cards, Bedspreads, Bargain Counter, China Ware. Is there anyone for it? Seventh Floor. Restaurant, Rest Rooms, Santa Claus. On every floor thousands are buying their Christmas presents. They have worked hard for the money to buy them: others have worked hard, a little harder, to make the presents ready to be bought. We have found it impossible to allow the sales ladies to be seated at any time during store hours. The salesgirls enter the purchases on their books: name, address, list number, price, sales tax, it will be delivered on Monday. A clean one. Yes this is a sample. Our trucks do go to Glen Cove. There will be no sales tax. I'm sorry. Thank you. Good evening. This is a dirty one. This is a dirty sample. This is a dirty life. There will be salesgirls fired after the seasonal rush. Our peak sales, our peak production is at Christmas. There will be factory girls laid off. The light of Christmas illumines our production system.

Each of us is alone in this world, alone in his family, alone in his love. We make these gifts as gestures to overcome the loneliness, in memory of the gift of the first Christmas which was the knowledge of our solitude in space and time. We are children and we are old and we die in a flash of time. How can we reach each other with gifts? There is not time enough. The gift of the first Christmas was the gift of timelessness. Nineteen hundred and forty years ago the word year lost all meaning. We have invented better clocks to measure meaningless time. So that now the gifts of charity and justice, the denial of justice and the refusal of charity which are the only gifts and the only refusals we can make, become gifts and refusals not in time, but in eternity. The instant in our day, the instant of our life, outlives the universe.

* * *

On Christmas Eve, 1939, the priest at Mass wore cavalry boots. We had had dinner at the officers' mess but the priest, because he was a private, had curried and stabled his horse, heard confessions, and now he was saying Midnight Mass. We had come to the Mass through the blackout and the windows of the church were covered so that the light would not shine out. It does not matter what army it was but it was the French army. Those men of the regiment who had had the habit of singing at Mass in their homes had formed a group to sing. They had prayer books and they sang the Gregorian and prayers for France and popular hymns. After the gospel the priest turned to the regiment: "Everything has been taken away from us, we are away from our homes," he said. He read the gospel in French and he said: "He came for all men of good will and our will is good because we have our duty and we do our work. Our duty does not include hatred. We are in a strange society now of men cut off from our homes. We are all together and we are all very lonely. Across the frontier there are soldiers too, cut off from their homes. There were soldiers, and wars we have forgotten, when there

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was the first Christmas on earth. The world is what it is, our duty is what it is, it was into a world like this and not into a different world, it was for men like us and not for a different kind of men, that Christ was born in Bethlehem." This year there are German officers and men and Catholics at Mass in that same church.

Year by year something is taken away, the semblance of self-sufficiency, the semblance of peace, until we are left in our essential solitude. It is not Christ alone who is homeless in this world.

* * *

When evening falls in New York you hear, if you are at any height above the rumor of the streets, steamships signal their departure, ferries and tugboats signal their course. These are the sounds which make the city dweller conscious of distance. Throughout the day the city has been self-sufficient; at night, later, the city will sleep. But in these hours between day and night, disarmed for a moment between work and sleep, the New Yorker is exposed to the worlds beyond the Hudson, beyond the sea. The ferries go to New Jersey and from there westward there lies a continent. The steamships, as dusk falls now, are heading toward Europe where soon it will be dawn, are heading now, this Christmas, toward South America where the season is summer. In the city at this hour we are aware of the Chinese, the Indians, the British and the French and the Germans, the Greeks and the Italians, not as we are aware of them when we read the newspapers, but directly conscious of them because we hear the sounds of the ships that could take us to them. In all seaports there is this sense of contact with distant continents. In all ports also, and more intensely, there is a feeling of separation. No one is more perpetually foreign to the world than is the sailor stubbornly and incessantly exploring it. No one could be lonelier than the man to whom no country, no people, are unknown. In this sad Christmas every friend one has abroad . . . in Kobe, in London, in Paris . . . can only serve to mark most cruelly, his and our fatal and incurable isolation. Abroad! but this world which is called Manhattan, or Brooklyn, or the State of New York, or the State of Arizona, or the United States, this is separated from us also, also foreign to us, also inaccessible to our love. I think of you, Dickerson, in your Indian School at Tuba City, Arizona. We stood looking at dinosaur tracks, and the night fell and we stood alone on that vast plain ravined by time. In what lost world do you live with whom I can have no contact? I think of whoever is coughing in the bathroom of the apartment next to mine. There are five inches of plaster and cardboard between us . . . and everything that he remembers, and does not remember, everything that I have suppressed in my mind and in my shame, separates us irremediably in this world.

What contact can there be between us who are living and those who at this moment, now, are dying, those who at this moment, now, are born?

The bridges span the East River. Crowded trains bring people home to Queens, to Brooklyn. From the bridges you look down on the river, on the lights of the shipping, on the lights of the factories and power plants. Arc lights indicate where coal is being loaded, oil pumped. The homegoing stream of motor traffic moves steadily over the bridges. The lights on the cars trace the avenues that lead from the bridges. There are lights in the hospitals and asylums on the river islands. On Manhattan in the apartment buildings each family signals its reunion after the day by lighting its windows. On the tall buildings beacons signal to the passing planes. The city and the world light their loneliness in the night, build bonfires in the dark, send up rockets to announce the distress of human solitude. The world is at war this Christmas, but always, at war or in peace, the world is a dance of death.

That is the reason for Bethlehem. The profound joy of Christmas is measured to our desperate need.

Chaucer and His Mayde Bright

By **Sister Rose Marie**

ONE well recognized section of medieval poetry is that which sings Our Lady, her miracles, her mercy, her gentle loving-kindness, but it is not only her official minstrels, as it were, that love to sound her praises; one meets her everywhere and often enough in less likely places. Chaucer, fourteenth century man of the world, teller of tales ranging from the Knight's courtly pseudo-classic love story to the *fabliau* vulgarity of the Reeve, is no exception to the rule that no singer failed somewhere to hymn the praises of the peerless Maid and Mother. All the world knows, or should know, the flawless gem that is the Prioresse's Tale—one of the most

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perfectly artistic narratives in literature, as it is one of the most sweetly human "miracle" stories. Not less beautiful is the lyric prologue to the Tale. Opening with the lines in praise of the Divinity, the Prioress continues:

> Wherfore in lande as best I can or may
> Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
> Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,
> To tell a storie I wol do my labour;
> Not that I may encresen hir honour;
> For she hirself is honour, and the rote
> Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules bote* . . . .
>
> Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence
> Thy vertu and thy great humiletee
> Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
> Far som-tyme, lady, er men pray to thee,
> Thou goost beforn of thy benignitee,
> And gettest us light, thrugh thy preyere
> To gyden us until thy sone so dere.

This excerpt is sufficient to illustrate what subsequent quotations will prove, that never does Chaucer speak of Our Lady but his verse rises to lyric beauty of a sweetness to be found in no other of his lines. Chaucer as a lad may have been himself not unlike the "litel clergeon, seven yeer of age" whose devotion to Our Lady was rewarded by a martyr's death and a subsequent miracle. Like him might Chaucer say, even when childish innocence had given place to the cynicism of the courtier, the diplomat and the man of business:

> This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
> I lovede alwey.

The incomparable passage in the Man of Law's Tale in which Constance commits herself and her child to the care of Divine Providence, when driven to sea in the open boat, is all too little known, since the story itself is not one of those usually selected for the general reader. The whole passage is well worth quotation:

> "He that me kepte fro the false blame
> Whyl I was yet on the lande amonges you,
> He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame
> In salte see, al-thogh I see nat how,
> As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.
> In him triste I, and in his moder dere,
> That is to me my seyl and eek my stere†. . . .
>
> "Moder" quod she, "and mayde bright, Marye,
> Sooth is it that thurgh wommannes eggement**,
> Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,
> For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;
> Thy blissful yen saw all his torment;
> Than is ther no comparisoun betwene
> Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.
>
> "Thou lady bright, to whom all woful cryen
> Thou glory of wommanhede, thou faire may
> Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day."

* Good, benefit.
† Star.
** Incitement.

And patient Griselda of the Clerk's Tale is in Chaucer's mind evidently, though he never openly stresses the comparison, drawn on the pattern of the maid of Galilee, the simple, humble handmaid of her Lord. When first Griselda is introduced, Chaucer reminds us that

> . . . hy God som tyme senden can
> His grace into a litel oxes stalle. . . .
>
> A daughter hadde he [the poorest man of the tiny village]
> fair y-nough to sighte,
> And Grisildis this younge Mayden highte

It was this Griselda, obedient, diligent for her father's comfort and the care of their poor home, whom the lord of the land selected for his bride and for whom were prepared clothing and jewels and retinue, though no one yet knew on whom his choice had fallen. Griselda, thinking herself least of all, had no higher ambition than to hasten with her work that she might stand with the other maidens "in our dore" and see the wedding pass, for

> She wolde han seyn som of that sighte.
> And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon
> And she set doun hir water-pot anoon
> Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
> And doun upon hir knees she gan to falle.
> And with sad† contenane kneleth stille
> Till she had herd what was the lordes wille.

Is it an accident that the ox's stall is mentioned twice in connection with Griselda? Does not the whole context suggest the scene of another embassy in which, as in this, it falls out that the Lord will not force the virgin's will, but awaits not only her consent to an espousal far above her rank but her full assent to the doing of His will. We remember too the sweet legend of Our Lady's desire to serve that Jewish maiden, whose high honor it should be to mother the Messias, her humility never dreaming that she herself might be chosen for that sublime dignity; thus too Griselda, joyfully ready to play the handmaiden's part, yet so full of gentle dignity as she yields her free consent, not only to be the lady of his castle, the mother of his son, but the complete servant of his will. So much of the apparent repulsive tyranny of Walter's conduct in the story disappears, or at least can be interpreted, if we fix our eyes on the circumstances of the betrothal and read the whole scene allegorically. This is where Chaucer's handling of the story surpasses other versions, and I think he loved it for these possibilities. Griselda too must sacrifice her son at her *lord's* bidding (not merely her husband's) and never is her "ecce, ancilla" wanting in fulfilment. At the end of the Tale Chaucer brings us back to suggest to us that it is to be taken not literally but allegorically, that it is a parable of our duty to accept as

† Sober, grave.

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Griselda did, as Constance did, what God sends:

> For sith a womman was so pacient
> Unto a mortal man, wel more us oghte
> Receyen all in gree* that God us sent.

And it is no proof that Matthew Arnold's test of "high seriousness" tells against Chaucer, that humorous applications follow, for Chaucer had the supreme gift, which Arnold himself lacked, of lightening his atmosphere when it threatened to become over-serious, so that it might never descend to the prosaic didactic.

The long and lovely *Invocacio ad Mariam* which introduces the Seconde Nonnes Tale, bears comparison with the prologue to the Prioresse's Tale. What a charming sense of fitness puts these hymns of praise on the lips of Chaucer's nuns, and how they help to disprove the superficial interpretations of his Prioress!

> Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydes
> Took mannes shap the eternal love and pees . . .
> Assembled is in thee magnificence
> With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee
> That thou that are the sonne of excellence,
> Not only helpest them that preyen thee,
> But ofte-tyme, of thy benignitee,
> Ful frely, er that men thy helpe biseche,
> Thou goost beforn, and are their lyves leche†
> Thou Cristes moder, doghter dere of Anne.

These last lines contain a thought repeated in Chaucer, that Our Lady not only answers our prayers with great generosity, but that her love and interest forestall our needs and grant the requests our ignorance fails to make.

Chaucer began his poems with an A.B.C. in honor of Our Lady—verses in which each letter of the alphabet is dedicated by making it open a stanza in honor of Mary—even X & Y & Z: Xristus and Ysaac and Zacharie—are pressed into this service of praise. A very fair Mariology, accurate as it is devout, humbly loving, and compassionate of Our Lady's sorrows, could be worked out from Chaucer's poetry far beyond what the necessarily brief quotations in this paper show. So we turn to that last pitiful prayer which Chaucer appended to his retraction of all in his writings that could harm or disedify:

> Wherefore I beseke yow mekely for the mercy of God, that ye preye for me, that Christ have mercy on me and forgive me all my giltes, ————and———— thanke I our Lord Jesu Christ (for all that was well done) and his blisful moder, and all the seintes of hevene, —so that I may be oon of hem at the day of dome that shull be saved.

We hope that his petition fails not of a favorable answer; that the

> . . . flour of virgines—alle
> Of whom that Bernard list so well to wryte

fulfilled Bernard's promise in regard to those who have recourse to her. Nor is it at all derogatory to Chaucer to say, as some may, that not all his stanzas are original or that praise of Mary was conventional in his day. There is nothing conventional in his adaptations or translations, as there is manifestly nothing conventional in his love of Cristes moder dere (How often he calls her this!)

> We han non other melodye or glee
> Us to rejoyce in our adversitee,
> N'advocat non that wol and dar so preye
> For us, and that for litel hyre as ye,
> *That helpen us for an Ave-Marie or tweye.*

* Good part. † Physician, healer.

Christmas at Dachau

Singe, unsterbliche Seele, der sündigen Menschheit Erlösung . . . (Klopstock, "The Messias").

By **Alfred Werner**

The COMMONWEAL *in its Christmas issue wishes to remember the Jewish race, privileged and selected, in which the Son of God took human flesh. We publish therefore this account of contemporary Jewish (and Christian) agony and humiliation, awed before that suffering as we are awed before the redoubtable and mysterious responsibility of those who inflict it. We ask our readers to see in the action we have taken no hatred for the persecutor, nor any incitement to hatred, but only pity and terror before the evil of our world.*—THE EDITORS.

HERR GRUENEWALD, *Standartenfuehrer* and commander of the Concentration Camp, had a tall Christmas tree erected in the center of Dachau, on the parade ground, a week before Christmas. The tree was more than fifteen feet high and lighted with hundreds of bulbs, shining at night strangely through the ghastly darkness.

It was, of course, designed for the Gentile guests, who were as numerous as the Jews—mostly political opponents of nazism: communists, social democrats, liberals, Catholics, monarchists, con-

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scientious objectors. We Jews had been taken there as hostages for the murder of Herr vom Rath in Paris.

The tree itself was neither "unto the Jews a stumbling-block" nor "unto the Gentiles a foolishness." On the contrary, all of us agreed that it was rather a blasphemy on Herr Gruenewald's part—the representative of a party which had declared: "We do not require Jesus as leader"—to place this symbol of love and peace on such a spot. But perhaps we wronged the commander, since for the modern German the Christmas festival, like the Yule festival of the ancient Teutons, is in fact "the solemn acknowledgment of Strength, that Strength which apart from transcendental theories hides within itself redemption from the eternal sin of the weak." Indeed nazi teachers tell the children at Christmas, or rather at the "festival of the winter solstice," that it is idle to look for the star of Bethlehem or the wondrous birth, since "in every new-born child God still comes into the world."

Yet in the evenings when, after an exhausting drill, we were forced to stand at attention for two or three hours at a stretch, to contemplate the Christmas tree, most of us were too weak and too frozen to enjoy the beauties of its symbolism. Storm troopers silently moved through our rows, cycling through the deep snow, ready to strike if a man dared even to turn his head away.

All of us had been looking forward to the holidays. There was a rumor of a coming amnesty which would include the Jews. Good God, we prayed, allow us to go home. We planned then to leave our beloved native country as fast as we knew how, leaving behind everything that remained of our belongings. On December 22 we were ordered to clear the camp of snow and ice. Snow-sweeping is a chore in Berlin as well as in Vienna, in New York as well as in Moscow, but in Dachau all work had to be done at the "double-quick," with not a minute's rest, under the kind eye of the storm troopers, who kicked all those people who should slip or collapse from strain. I remember an elderly man whose loaded wheelbarrow skidded into the water where we had to dump the snow. The nazi guard kicked him into the icy water, too. He remained there until after Christmas day. . . .

December 24 came—but no reprieve. All work, however, was stopped in the afternoon. This was not done for the benefit of the prisoners, but for the sake of the nazi guards, who really deserved a few days' vacation and recreation in Munich after such exhausing work as vexing the elderly people among us. The Gentile prisoners were allowed to receive little Christmas packages from their relatives, except for members of the Exegetist sect, which had opposed National Socialism from the first, as these people had felt it was contrary to the moral thought of the Bible. The Jews, of course, were not permitted to receive any little Christmas packages from their relatives since Herr Gruenewald respected the traditions of the orthodox and did not want to offend their feelings. And we cannot blame him for not knowing that by giving little presents we Jews celebrate "Chanukkah," the "Feast of Lights," at the same time as Christmas—a feast commemorating the victory of the Maccabees over Antiochus Epiphanes, whose army was defeated and driven out of Palestine.

Anyway we could expect to get a little rest; we would be awakened an hour later in the morning and, above all, would be spared those dreaded visits of the supervising storm trooper—or so we were told by our "trusty." And he knew the conditions at Dachau fairly well, since he had been imprisoned in 1933 and had a number below 300 whereas mine was above 30,000. He was a former Social Democratic leader, a stickler for custom himself, a veteran who had spent his Christmas there five times and knew well that Gruenewald would not leave any part of the ceremony out.

For him and the five other Gentile prisoners who were in charge of our batch of some 800 Jews, we prepared in the "dining-room" of our department as nice a Christmas dinner as we could manage. There was no turkey, of course, but we bought some corned beef at the camp canteen, and instead of pies and tarts we furnished the Christmas table with cookies and jars of jam and marmalade. Our trusties were not allowed to visit their Christian friends in the Gentile camp, so they were to have as good a time as prisoners can prepare for their co-prisoners.

We had in our particular batch several converted Jews, one of whom, a man of fifty, had been baptized as a child and brought up in a monastery. According to the Nuremberg laws he was nevertheless regarded a Jew. He was a bit queer, lean, and had a high voice, yet he was very friendly, enduring and tolerant, having made friends even with our orthodox Jews. He had been a bookkeeper, was unmarried, had no relatives or friends, nobody who would help him regain his liberty, and he did not even make use of the opportunity of writing letters to people, given every fortnight or so.

In the late afternoon, while we could hear the chimes of the church of Dachau village proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will," Herr Suendermann (that was the convert's name) suddenly rose to address us all. "Do you know," he asked his surprised audience, "for whom we prepare our meal? For Jesus Christ! He Himself is to visit our hut tonight." Now our supervisor, though a good Christian and a bright man, made the grave mis-

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take of not taking him seriously: "No, my friend," he laughed "the storm troopers will not let Him in!" But the orator, filled with prophetic fury, shouted: "That is a blasphemy—none can stop the Lord! I myself will go to the gate to receive Him when He comes."

We felt rather uneasy, so seriously and gravely did he utter his pronouncement. We knew of a man who had escaped from the hut in a fit one evening and had gone to the gate and had tried to pass as Herr Gruenewald himself. He was taken to the hospital for his pains. . . . We tried to quiet our prophet, to divert his attention by talking about the weather. But he kept to his fixed idea that Jesus would come in person and that we all should meet Him at the gate.

So, for his sake and for our own safety, we thought it best to bind and gag him; but when we approached him, he saw our intention and roared in a stentorian voice: "Jesus Christ, come and help me against these infidels!"

We knew that the few guards left in the camp must have heard the cry. And in a moment an unfamiliar guard entered the room. When he had heard the story from our supervisor, he knew how to cure the prophet, who lay exhaustedly on the floor, white foam flecking his lips. He dragged Herr Suendermann to the door and pushed him out, putting his face into the snow to "cool him off." Quietly he waited for some twenty minutes. Then he ordered the prisoner to get up. "Now, what have you to say about Jesus Christ?"

"Our Lord Jesus Christ will forgive you," the convert quietly said.

"What, you damned Jew," the enraged nazi cried, and beat the poor man with his fists. Two of our men were ordered to carry Herr Suendermann, who was bleeding incessantly, to the nazi barracks. The others should have their fun with that damned queer Jew.

But before leaving our hut, the guard looked at the Christmas table, heaped with good things. And with a sudden kick he overthrew the table—so that the marmalade and the cookies and the corned beef splashed over the floor and the wall, and the tin plates rolled into the corners and under the stove.

On Christmas Eve, 1938, we lay down in our plain straw very early.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

WHAT is said here concerning the new book (Church and State, Don Luigi Sturzo, Longmans, $5.00) now added to the long list of vital works in philosophy and sociology already published by one of Europe's greatest intellectual and spiritual leaders, the Italian priest, Don Luigi Sturzo, may best be described as notes for a review, and not the review itself. The recent arrival of Don Sturzo in New York, coming as a refugee from London, where he had been living in retirement since his exile by Mussolini, will add to American interest in the latest exposition of the fundamental principles and ideas of a Catholic author whose work in the sphere of philosophy, theology, canon and civil law has long been recognized as highly important by those best qualified to understand and criticize his studies of and contributions to the literature dealing with those subjects.

To all but a small number of the general reading public, perhaps, such literature is highly abstruse. Ordinarily the average run of educated and intelligent readers respects it, and its author, more than they read and study at first hand. But in the case of Don Sturzo two reasons concur with the innate importance of his subject matter to increase greatly the general, popular interest in his books. The first reason, of course, is the fact that Don Sturzo's ideas are surcharged with dynamic force, impelling other minds coming under the potent influence of their author's creative mind to take steps to carry them into the arena of practical politics.

This fact has been made widely and even sensationally known by our newspapers, during the past twenty-five years, in their dispatches from Italy dealing with various aspects of the rise and then the totalitarian rule of fascism in that country of innumerable revolutions and wars. For such dispatches constantly recorded or referred to the struggle of the Popular Party, in Italy, first to arouse the Italian nation, their leaders especially, to work for long-needed economic and social reforms; and, next, to its struggle to maintain the ground it had gained before the abrupt and violent advent of fascism against the efforts of Mussolini to destroy its organized strength among the peasants, the workers and the Catholic intellectual élite that comprised its most effective membership.

Mussolini certainly succeeded most completely in smashing and dispersing into obscurity or exile all the leaders of the Popular Party created by Don Sturzo and his ardent and devoted disciples, including, above all, Don Sturzo himself. How well, however, the Duce of *fascimo* has succeeded in quenching the inner spirit once animating the creative and beneficent political, economic, and sociological activities of Don Sturzo's Popular Party is quite another question, which future history, and not contemporary journalism, will answer.

For it is certainly known to those well acquainted with conditions in Italy that beneath the smooth surface of the apparent conformity to *fascimo's* rigid rule there surges the suppressed but far from sterilized social forces which the Popular Party created by Don Sturzo formerly co-ordinated and directed into many channels of social, economic, political and cultural activity; all converging toward the hope of establishing a secure and desirable form of democratic society, built upon principles of social justice, of respect for personal and family and corporate human dignity and autonomy and liberty. These principles

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were derived by Don Luigi Sturzo, both as a priest and a philosopher, from the doctrine and philosophy of Catholicism, especially the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Because this is the case, books revealing Don Sturzo's fundamental message, as the present monumental work so clearly and so fully does, will be, I think, of far more than an academic interest to mere students of abstract subjects. It will be of wide and practical interest to all the many readers, among the average run of the general public, who seek to find in their reading of contemporary books clues that may guide their minds through the maze of the world's greatest crisis and upheaval of destructive forces to an understanding of the fundamental issues of our age of world-revolution. Such readers are inspired by the hope that if they may understand the realities of the world-crisis, they may, in greater or lesser degree, according to the measure of their capacities and opportunities, cooperate with like-minded people of good-will in striving to reconstruct our shattered society.

These serious readers of serious books will find in the second of the two reasons I would suggest as providing inspiration for a wide and lasting interest in Don Sturzo's writings, and particularly in his new work, "Church and State," a very welcome cause for joining the closest students of contemporary philosophy and history and sociology and political theorizing as earnest readers of Don Sturzo. This second reason is the circumstance that this, possibly the most important, so far, of all its author's books, must, in its original Italian form, have been written in a singularly lucid and attractive style; for this high virtue of all vital and lasting literature certainly is present in its English translator's version, and makes its reading most accessible and enjoyable even to readers—for example, myself—who are far from considering themselves equipped to follow, still less to master, the technical terminology of most modern works which deal with such abstruse themes as those expounded by Don Sturzo. Yet such intelligent readers among the general public who are sincerely interested in fundamental subjects, are precisely those who abominate most of the books hastily produced in an effort, usually quite abortive, to "popularize" the works of creative thinkers. They may rest assured, in turning their serious attention to "Church and State," that no trace of the superficial treatment of profound ideas and none of the strained attempts to "streamline" the treatment of such ideas by their original begetters, or to reexpress some distorted or shallow reflection of them in jazzy prose, which spoil all too many would-be popularizations of great original works, will be found in this book.

Barbara Barclay Carter's high ability as a translator is well known and, let me rather sceptically hope, adequately appreciated by those who realize the high value of a really competent worker in that most useful yet so dangerous domain of literature; but not even a translator of genius, I think, could succeed as she has succeeded here, not only in grasping and presenting her author's message with understanding and sympathy, but also in expressing it clearly and simply and attractively, unless the book she translated was in itself the inspiration of her achievement.

My space for discussing this masterpiece of modern Catholic literature has run out, but I shall return to the subject later, meanwhile urging you to waste none of your time with reviews of it, but to hasten to the work itself.

One more note, however, is urgently necessary, for many reasons; namely, to repeat what was said here last week that those of the readers of THE COMMONWEAL who wish to know facts concerning Don Sturzo's future work in the United States which may open the way for their cooperation in spreading the benefits of that work are requested to write to me at my home address, Roseville Road, Westport, Connecticut.

Communications

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I have just finished reading your splendid article (November 22), "Children's Books —1940." And I would like to point out a statement that I consider misleading, namely, "This year it seems to me that the field [Catholic juveniles] as a whole has not merely remained stationary but has positively retrogressed."

I am sure that by "Catholic juveniles" is meant, not Catholic children's literature in the same sense and by the same criteria that we define Catholic adult literature, but rather religious or devotional juveniles. This field, always poor, has not advanced. But the field of Catholic children's literature this year is superb—excellent format, virile writing, in both fiction and non-fiction. Such books as "Young Mac of Fort Vancouver," "Out of the Net," Padraic Colum's "Where the Winds Never Blew," and Libushka Bartusek's "Happy Times in Czechoslovakia" would be outstanding books in any year of publishing. That they are Catholic literature for children also is our justifiable pride. And there are many others.

MARY KIELY.

VICTORY FOR THE PRESIDENT

Palo Alto, California.

TO the Editors: I have so often been upon the point of writing you in praise and appreciation of your fine weekly that it seems ungracious to make my first actual letter one of criticism. But in your issue of November 15, in summarizing the results of the Presidential election, you use certain phrases that seem to me unworthy of your usual attitude of fairness.

After quoting Mr. Farley's admirable plea for national unity, regardless of party, you say: "Those who were richer and more powerful and more privileged before the depression and the New Deal must place social justice before the mirage of a regained, boomtime 'normalcy.'"

This was surely to attribute rather low motives to the millions of voters who differ with the methods of the present administration, without ever having known or desired wealth, privilege or power.

Might it not be that many of them feel that true social justice lies in opportunity rather than charity, that sus-

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tained dole and prolonged (and, we were assured, inevitable) idleness for millions of our fellow creatures were the figments of fearful minds? That such conditions need not exist in America, and have in previous periods only existed for brief times? That the power to create a large class of dependents, looking to one hand as the dispenser of public moneys, may be too easily abused. It was Mr. Farley who was quoted as saying that one recipient of largesse is worth four votes; might not the significance of this remark, in connection with the figures of the recent election, give some of us cause for uneasiness?

My own hard times began just before another bad depression, that of 1901. Bank after bank failed, bread lines formed, and San Francisco, one of the richest of the smaller American cities, had her first unemployment riots and parades. We were told then that there must always be unemployment because machines had destroyed jobs.

The depression vanished, neither McKinley nor Theodore Roosevelt taking any credit for returning prosperity, and some of us who had been credulous in 1901 were amused to see the jobs that, far from destroying them, machines created. I need only remind you of motor jobs, beauty parlor jobs, jobs in the domestic uses of electricity, gas station jobs, movie jobs, radio jobs, airplane jobs—all unforseen in 1901.

Social consciousness has moved rapidly in the last quarter century; we know now that we are our brothers' keepers; vast improvements in the field of inheritance and income taxes and the general sharing of the good things of life do not appertain to any one President or any one administration. The heads of great enterprises employ whole staffs of doctors, teachers, scientists, sociological experts to study continually the betterment of conditions of those unfitted by background or lack of education to help themselves.

But I am glad that my own opportunity to solve my own problem, and that of the brothers who fought their own way to prosperity beside me, was not taken away by any sentimental weakness engendered by the idea that it was easier to get a little for nothing than get a lot for the investment in humiliations, discouragements, anxieties, doubts that made the road rough.

Apropos of wealth, power and privilege; these have always been Mr. Roosevelt's. You do not feel that he has abused them. Be just to those who have won varying measures of them by hard work and individual struggle, and do not condemn twenty millions of us unheard.

KATHLEEN NORRIS.

THE YOUTH OF NEW YORK

Collegeville, Minn.

TO the Editors: The Reverend Edward Moore, in his review of *The Youth of New York City,* (October 11), acclaims the authors for having knocked some of our assumptions "into cocked hats." As an example he singles out the fact that they "have validated the existence of the family and the home in New York City—all ye smug out-of-towners kindly take notice!"

Father Moore is mistaken if he believes that we out-of-towners draw pictures of New York City as a homeless desert where children roam the streets and have no roof to call their own and where no child knows the name or whereabouts of his parents. What we do say is that too often that roof is merely the floor of another family's home; that the sheer lack of space makes it difficult to rear a family and militates against families of a sufficient size to maintain a stable population (which is a question of fact, and not an assumption); that the mechanistic and man-centered environment lacks the wholesomeness of the non-urban community; and that it fails to provide opportunity for training children in domestic virtues. Finally, the impossibility of ownership of tangible property deprives the families of the necessary security and independence.

There is another aspect of the question—the failure of the great city to provide work for many of those who have the desire but not the means to begin a new cycle of families. In his review, Father Moore supplies sufficient evidence with the quotation that "more than one-fourth of those who had begun to look for work after January 1, 1930, had found none by January 1, 1935." The same source also provides the information that in 1935 only one-half of those New York youth who wished to work were employed. Are those facts going to have any influence on the nation's family life in the future?

At a recent educational gathering I attended a sociologist declared: "It is better to be on relief or WPA in the city than to be a peasant on the land." Some of us out-of-towners believe that that expresses the conviction of the average New Yorker. We lament it, but there is not much that can be done about it. Something can be done, however, about keeping a majority of rural youth in rural areas. That is our task. And we especially welcome epithets such as "smug out-of-towners," for they indicate that the great cities are now for the first time on the defensive. We intend to keep them there.

EMERSON HYNES.

REDS IN THE GUILD

Arlington, Va.

TO the Editors: Permit me to indicate two errors of fact in the article "Reds In The Guild," by Frank Rahill, published in your issue of November 15.

Mr. Rahill says "Bob Buck . . . who had opposed affiliation with the CIO and who has been accused (which he denies) of having opposed the 'broadening of the base' to include the commercial departments."

The record is clear that I was second in point of time only to the late Heywood Broun in advocating affiliation to the CIO and that, more than any other one person, I forced that issue on the reluctant high command of the ANG.

On the other hand the record is so clear that I opposed "broadening the base" as premature that it would be foolish of me to deny it. I never did deny it. I am proud of it. What I have denied is the baseless accusation that I opposed organization in the broadened part of the base after a referendum ratified the decision of the St. Louis convention of 1937. ROBERT M. BUCK.

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The Stage & Screen

Trivia

LAST WEEK the theatrical season returned to its state of somnolence. There were three offerings—that is, two plays and a monologist—but they added up to little. The first something, entitled "The Romantic Mr. Dickens," was presented at the Playhouse. Its chief aim seemed to be to prove that Dickens was not romantic. In fact under the hands of Robert Keith he was dull. It probably was not Mr. Keith's fault entirely, for the writing and the characterizations by H. H. and Marguerite Harper was bare, filled with *clichés,* and generally ineffective. The bright spot of the evening was the appearance, the first on a New York stage, of Miss Diana Barrymore. Miss Barrymore is the daughter of John of the same name, and she proved that she has the true Barrymore touch. She has still things to learn, especially regarding gesture and the use of her hands, but she has a beautiful voice and a beautiful face, and she speaks her lines with intelligence and feeling. Moreover she has that something called personality, which may mark her for stardom in the not distant future.

The next play was by Ferenc Molnar and it was presented at Henry Miller's Theatre. That it was by Molnar aroused keen interest, an interest which subsided as the evening wore on. It was very thin Molnar indeed, and in only two scenes displayed the touch which in "The Swan," "The Play's the Thing," "Liliom," "The Devil" and half a dozen other plays make the Hungarian dramatist unique in the field of modern sentimental comedy. "Delicate Story" is well named, but its delicacy is so delicate that it is anemic. The story of a delicatessen dealer's wife who falls in love with a young customer, who is in love with another girl, and the return of the wife to her husband's arms, is, except in two scenes, told without originality or even fancy. It is wordy, prolix, and lacks incisiveness, and not even the fine cast given it by Gilbert Miller and Vinton Freedley galvanizes it into life. Miss Edna Best gives a beautiful enactment of the wife, and if charm and technical virtuosity could have saved the play Miss Best would have saved it. Then there are bits by such a splendid actor as Arnold Korff and such splendid actresses as Carlotta Nillson and Katherine Grey, the former appearing on the New York stage for the first time in twenty-seven years! As the husband Jay Fassett gives the best performance of his career. Only John Craven in the part of the young man is inadequate. Mr. Craven, though in American folk plays excellent, has neither the charm nor the assurance needed in Continental comedy.

The third offering was Mr. Jimmy Savo in pantomime and songs at the Belmont Theatre. Mr. Savo is one of the supreme masters of the comic-pathetic, and if all his numbers had been as good as "Predicament of an Old-Fashioned Girl," "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," or "Chestnut Man" the evening would have been delightful. But the rest of his material was not equal to its exponent, and despite Mr. Savo's vigorous efforts, seconded by Hiram Sherman's introduction, there were stretches not untouched by dullness. But Mr. Savo atoned for these by singing for a final encore, "Go Away River." You see it was not an exciting week. GRENVILLE VERNON.

I Remember, I Remember

"*POWER AND THE LAND*" is a 36-minute short that merits your attention. Because the problems of rural electrification could not be as effectively simplified as the problems in "The River" or "The Fight for Life," this new government film is not as forceful as those. It is, however, particularly brilliant in its documentary aspects in its first half which has a nostalgic, back-to-the-land quality. Director Joris Ivens moved in on the William Parkinson family on their farm near St. Clairsville, Ohio, and has done a fine job of portraying a pre-electrification farm. Excellent shots of the 5 a.m. awakening show the farmer with kerosene lanterns going to the barn, his wife lighting the kitchen stove that will soon be unbearably hot in this mid-August weather. The day wears on—milking, cooling the milk to keep it fresh by pumping water (no windmills here); yesterday's milk which soured is returned from the dairy and fed to the pigs; the two eldest sons go into the fields; Mrs. Parkinson does the family washing the hard way; the little girl cleans the lamp chimneys; the little boy teases his father who is cutting cornstalks (the sunflower scene is a gem and this youngster almost steals the picture from its hero—electricity). After supper, by lamplight the children study while Mrs. Parkinson mends. Mr. Parkinson returns to the barn to sharpen tools. This beautiful and homely photography is enlivened by Stephen Vincent Benét's commentary, recited by William P. Adams, and by Douglas Moore's music. But three farms out of four in this big inventive country are left in the dark. So Parkinson and his neighbors get together, learn about rural electrification. A cooperative unit is formed; REA funds are borrowed; electricity comes to the Parkinsons (and to 700,000 other families who are taking advantage of the REA. Drudgery is gone because kilowatt hours don't get tired. Now the pump works all the time for a few cents a day. Power, electric lights, refrigerator, washing machine, stove, radio, iron—I don't know where the money comes from to buy all these, but as the film ends the Parkinsons are smiling from ear to ear.

Hollywood features seem a little glamorously phony after seeing Ivens's effective short. Although Miriam Hopkins is well cast as Mrs. Leslie Carter, the vivacious, early-1900 actress famous for her violent theatrical outbursts (off and on stage), this temperament-in-reminiscence isn't always all it's cracked up to be. *"Lady with Red Hair"* is inclined to be heavy and on the dull side. Its bad script and meandering, pointless story, only vaguely based on facts and the actress's memoirs, proves too much for Director Kurt Bernhardt who probably isn't well grounded in such American institutions as the renowned Mrs. Carter and David Belasco. Claude Rains, in best form as the legendary Belasco who could make "an actress out of a

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telephone pole," steals the show so capably that one wonders why he wasn't made the central figure and the film called "Man with White Hair."

Last year, Edward Small produced "The Man in the Iron Mask." Critics gave it a bad rating—even for a swashbuckling Dumas; and the picture is said to have made a pile of money. Now Mr. Small, using the same formula and some of the same cast, presents *"The Son of Monte Cristo."* The result is even worse, so there's no telling how much this new film will net. It's full of the clichés you'd expect in an 1865 little principality of Lichtenburg: intrigue, bravado, duels on staircases, unprotected ladies fleeing in coaches, an enormous palace with dungeons and secret passageways, musical comedy costumes and ham acting in the best, or worst, tradition. Grand Duchess Zona (Joan Bennett) is kept a prisoner by the dictator of Lichtenburg (George Sanders) who wants to marry her; but brave young Monte Cristo (Louis Hayward) disguises himself as a fop to fool the villain, and as the hooded "Torch" to fool everyone else, and saves Zona in the nick of time. "You are even more beautiful when you're angry," says he to Joan—and she does look swell in brocades and paste jewels. But the poor audience, even more worn out than Cristo Junior, who in one scene admits he's tired of climbing in and out of windows and chimneys, will exhaust themselves trying to decide if all this is satire, straight melodrama or comedy.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Birds and a Country

Audubon's America. Edited by Donald Culross Peattie. Houghton. $6.00.

AUDUBON was produced by the wilderness. Others painted better than he, and wrote better, but no other had quite his attachment to a virginal America. Arrived from France in 1803, married, and established as a storekeeper, John James Audubon lost his breath once he pushed out into the Kentucky and Ohio country. He was a failure in business. Yet it was not until he was thirty-five, and commerce no longer offered any support to his family, that he at last took to the palette for a living.

He had always drawn, of course. David had been one of his teachers. And he had often left the counter to track the life in the woods. Even then his wife said, "I have a rival in every bird." Visited once by Alexander Wilson, earliest of American ornithologists, he no doubt then first obtained the idea of his future project. Business closed to him, he left wife and babes, and began his long, flaming journey. For seven years, poor, sometimes sick, unsupported, he trudged and labored and searched and exulted, until he had a sheaf to satisfy him. Then he made trips to Europe until he got his publishers, and eventually sought out most of his subscribers himself. Surely such a man had been inspired by the virgin beauty of what he saw.

Yet it is a question—once more provoked by the 17 superb reproductions in this volume—as to why Audubon appeals as he does. Considered separately, drawing, or color, or design, as, say, in *The Purple Grackle,* do not impress. But the total gives a joy not unlike his own constant bath in nature. That unsoiled eye saw the bird in movement, caught its alertness, and set it down with a concentration born of love. The devotion of Audubon comes through regardless of his deficiencies. So it is, too, with his prose. For this volume has as its other recommendation that it presents unclipped and undiluted many of the most forceful pages from his journal. He erred, he misspelled, he frequently felt as well as thought in French. Nevertheless, his anger against the bird-butchers of Labrador, his admiration for a forest sunset, his exultation in a new bird-note, come through no less infallibly than they do in his refreshing plates. Audubon gave himself so completely, one might say, that he overflowed his own boundaries. That undoubtedly is the explanation for a quality otherwise undefinable.

Incidentally, he would have rejoiced in the present publication. Color, type, binding, all adhere to him as he did to his originals, and make this a real treasure in his name.

JEROME MELLQUIST.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Home Town: The Face of America. Sherwood Anderson and Farm Security Photographers. Alliance. $2.50.

IF THIS is just another item in the "God-Bless-America" campaign, it is still an item very much worth having. Or perhaps America is worth a blessing after all. "Home Town," at any rate, is a really beautiful book of pictures and essays on the American small town and the very interesting people who live there.

The pictures are by Farm Security Photographers (whatever they are) and are uniformly excellent throughout. The essays are by Sherwood Anderson, the famous rural editor and novelist, and discounting a little pantheism, are more than satisfactory and at times genuinely moving.

Anderson starts off by complaining about a young friend who "has a burning desire to remake life, the whole social scheme . . . he declares that the day of the individual has passed, that now we must think of people only in the mass." Anderson, however, thinks the young man should be "trying to get a little better understanding of the people in his own house, in the street on which his house stands; trying to get closer to the people of his own town."

Certainly this is a very Christian idea, and the young man's idea about submerging the individual in the mass is a very un-Christian one, however popular it may have become lately. Anything that can make us see the beauty and importance of life's little things, of life's little people, is a big help in any social scheme. At least we can be sure that no social scheme, however perfect, will be worth the paper on which it is blueprinted unless the men who set out to make it work have a strong feeling for that beauty and that importance. If not, they should read "Home Town" without delay.

JOHN C. CORT.

Planning for Productivity. K. Lonberg-Holm and C. Theodore Larson. International Industrial Relations Institute. $1.00.

THE LITERATURE on housing tends to be more voluminous than profound, and it is only the rare volume devoted to this subject that rises above the plane of obvious journalism. This is not said to decry legitimate reporting but there has been a plethora of books by reputed housing experts and authorities which have combined judicious log-rolling with the exploitation of this subject in the interest of the authors' professional reputations. In none of these books has there been any attempt at a scien-

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tific approach to the problem entailed in providing a type of housing that is more than a sanitary, minimum refuge. Yet the essence of the problem is not met by providing sanitary barracks for the underprivileged but rather in a readjustment of the whole technique of housing production.

In contrast to the diffuse generalities of the usual book on housing, the book here reviewed is a scientific approach to the problem. It is the work of two architects, who are also research specialists, and is an analysis and statement of the factors involved. The end the authors have in view is the development of low cost housing units, wholly or in part industrially produced. In these are to be combined gracious design and the spaciousness necessary for complete living and for family growth.

The housing contemplated in this program is not to be confused with the gadget-equipped, pre-fabricated houses which, having served their apparent purpose of advertising the gadgets, have now passed into oblivion. In contrast the implication of this book's program is both reasonable and profound, because it deals with the basic factors of family life and the use of building and industrial technique to create an adequate physical environment for such a life.

The format and typography are particularly fine. As this book is an outline for a comprehensive research, the completion of this last promises to establish a valid housing technique based on modern conditions. The publication of the results of this research, therefore, will bring to the chaos of the housing situation a much needed scientific exactitude from which far reaching and valuable results may be expected.

BARRY BYRNE.

CRITICISM

Pageant of Letters. Alfred Noyes. S. & W. $2.50.

ALFRED NOYES is the chronicler of persons on quest. At one time they are a group from the world of outlawed gallantry, at another a trio from importunate and dauntless childhood. This in "The Forest of Wild Thyme" is a lovely shadowing of his own pursuit and discovery of the divine secret hidden in the heart of the smallest flower.

Now comes a less apocalyptic adventure, a journey through wide ranges of literature. The author calls it a "Pageant of Letters." It is just that, an exhibition, a parade for general entertainment. The characters, eighteen in all, are obviously of the select group to which Noyes introduced his students in his days of lecture professorship in America and England. The essays may easily be a part of those affable introductions. That, in a way, accounts for the father of "Marjorie Daw" among them. It explains, too, the absence of reference to critical studies of Chaucer later than Matthew Arnold.

The book is, however, not a volume of critical analysis but of agreeable companionship. This may be one of its merits. Now that research is so well under way and the slightest commentary must be documented, the ordinary reader is left without ordinary literary guidance. This Noyes supplies. He does so with particular excellence of style and diction in Shelley, with nice feeling in Stevenson, with profound admiration in Alice Meynell. The still surviving cult of "Saint R.L.S." does not support his statement, "The poetry of Stevenson has never received its full due." The sincerest of the Meynell school of critics will hardly claim that "The three greatest sonnets ever written by a woman are 'Renunciation,' 'Thoughts in Separation' and 'The Neophyte,' and they are all by Alice Meynell." One thinks of at least two others which, measured by content, artistic detachment, spiritual altitude, overtop this flawless trinity. They are both by her kinswoman, Elizabeth Barrett, and so belong to the same great tradition.

Through the "Pageant of Letters" one meets much that is familiar, much that is unalterably the same because essentially true. The banner under which the pageant marches gives it its bravest front. It enlists its pilgrims on quest under new allegiances and witnesses to undiscovered aspects of truth in them. It is the banner of the Cross. Again and again it flashes through the ranks of the printed page, shining out with the luminous clarity of the light that is life.

SISTER M. MADELEVA.

FICTION

Amerika. Franz Kafka. Translated by Edwin Muir. New Directions. $1.00.

THIS is a baroque vision: humorous, pitiful, chimerical; for Kafka died before he was able to check for himself—even with the haphazard snapshot eye of the hurried tourist—this extraordinary, bewildering land.

"Karl Rossmann," a perplexed youth reminiscent of Dreiser's "Clyde Griffiths" in "An American Tragedy," comes to this land to avoid a nauseous domestic mix-up. We follow his presence in many remarkable lithographs of human minutiae: the wrangling of a befuddled stoker —as good as the captain, anyday; the jiu-jitsu gyrations of a girl of high society; the hopeless *ennui* of a broken down Brunhilda, a sloppy opera singer who is fawned upon by two desperate vagabonds; the superb egotism of a head waiter. But all these are sordid pictures, not of America, or New York, or even of Oklahoma; the desperation, the meanness and shabbiness are distinctly Old World in their acuteness.

Franz Kafka, it is known, willed his remaining manuscripts to oblivion; even before he died in 1921 he was never willing to publish; he preferred, instead, to read his work to a private audience of friends. And herein lies the key to the personalized and, possibly, insignificant quality of his posthumous "Amerika." This Czech was a writer who enjoyed, primarily, the rare satisfaction, the exquisite exhaustion, which creative labors bring. Moreover, while he must have been aware of his ability to write beautiful prose he was never willing to admit prophetic qualities; he, too, was struggling.

This is not a book for one who seeks joy or solace in reading; it is, rather, intended for the enlightened who, aware of the deep, the meaningful, can appreciate as well a scherzo with proportionate discernment.

STEPHEN BALDANZA.

Olives on the Apple Tree. Guido D'Agostino. Doubleday. $2.50.

THIS IS a novel whose intention we must respect. Its author gives a picture of Italian-Americans in a community in upstate New York and makes a plea that they remain genuine while becoming Americans. The characterization is good except in the case of the hero-hobo, Marco, who is just too, too noble, and Mr. D'Agostino has a fine ear for Italian-American dialect; but the book, for all its accuracy, leaves no impact. I think that one reason is that the author has confused objectivity with lack of passion.

He knows his Italians just as well as John Fante knows his, but whereas Fante's people are alive and sometimes

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even memorable, Mr. D'Agostino's are almost always two-dimensional and without vitality. Marco is one of a type that occurred frequently in the more poorly-written proletarian novels of a few years ago. He goes around spouting human kindness and noble words and manages to make himself about as much of a prig as the author intended his up-state "fast-set" people to be. The difference between Fante and D'Agostino is in the writing, and if anyone should be interested in seeing just what difference sheer writing ability makes in two authors with equally accurate knowledge of their subject, he might compare this book with Fante's recently published "Dago Red."

HARRY SYLVESTER.

The Ill-Made Knight. T. H. White. Putnam. $2.50.

WHEN a novelist enchanted by one of the world's great matters reaches his third volume, as Mr. White does in his successor to "The Sword in the Stone" and "The Witch in the Wood," he has committed himself to a quest that will not let him go. This new novel matches the others in virtuosity and wit, and it outdoes them in wisdom, swift, scalpel-sharp, of a kind infrequently consorting with cleverness. Here the mid-twentieth century appraises the Round Table, "a vague idea like democracy, or sportsmanship, or morals," and criticizes itself. Not alone a sad King Arthur says: "We have achieved the bodily things: peace and law and prosperity and all that: and now we lack work. If we invent another bodily employment, a temporal employment — mere empire-building or something like that—we shall only be faced by the same problem again. . . . If our Might was given a channel so that it worked for God, instead of for the rights of man, surely that would stop the rot, and be worth doing?"

As he should be in any treatment of the Round Table, Lancelot is the hero. Straightway the reader needs one warning: here is no nineteenth-century sentimentalizing, no languishing, soft condonement of sin in the guise of "fated passion" and "great love." The men and the morals follow more ancient models. Even as a boy, Lancelot is ugly, soul-tormented, ferocious with himself, powerful, and pitiable, self-named "the Chevalier Mal-Fet—the Ill-Made Knight." Beyond his beloved Malory, Mr. White knows surely the poets of the deep Middle Ages, Chrétien de Troyes and others who judged their material in the light of a critical moral realism. Some of the description on the dust-jacket—"that classic infidelity, the affair between Lancelot and . . . Guenever"—falsifies Mr. White's tone, for he understands the Catholic spirit of the old tragic tales and he is writing in 1940, not 1925. His Lancelot dreams and prays, struggles toward God, falls, strives to live in and by his conscience, goes mad in his own decision that he is but a swindle, and, in the end, is "forced to have it out with his spiritual doom." His is the human dignity and agony of self-knowledge. The violence of our day is recapturing one honesty at least for literature: as in Homer and Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare, a strong man may weep and be the more honorable and manly for his tears.

OLIVE B. WHITE.

HISTORY

The Tide of Fortune. Stefan Zweig. Viking. $2.75.

"IT IS a nobler thing to remove the barriers of the intellectual life than to extend the boundaries of Empire," wrote Caesar of Cicero in the dedication of "De Analogia." Stefan Zweig takes Cicero for the starting point in the sketches which represent explosive incidents of history and "The Head upon the Rostrum" follows classical tradition in describing as Cicero's greatest triumph, the calm with which he faced his assassins, and that the severed head, displayed so horribly on the Forum by Antony, spoke more forcibly for the rights of the free citizen than all the Ciceronian rhetoric. As everyone knows, Mr. Zweig is a master of dramatic and lucid narration—a more unusual gift than may be supposed—and it is probably the keenness of his dramatic sense that leads him to use history as springboard. In each of the sketches, the reader's imagination is challenged, for Zweig's art lies in his never saying too much. He lures his public to cooperation. Nor is he squeamish. There are certain pages of history which we are apt to turn over quickly: the sickening destruction in the fall of Byzantium; the last stand of the Grand Army at Waterloo; the tragedy of Scott at the South Pole. All three are featured. Mr. Zweig spotlights that little postern gate of the great Byzantine Wall forgotten and left open; Waterloo, he describes from the side of Grouchy, sent by Napoleon to trail Bluecher. If Grouchy, when he heard the distant thunder of the battle, had disobeyed his orders and turned back . . .? "France might have been saved," says Zweig. But can one make France synonymous with Napoleon? The South Pole Expedition he rejects as a failure, for death, such as Scott's gives "impetus to intensified life; a disaster that generates a will to climb the unclimbable." Although Mr. Zweig has corrected the hallowed inaccuracies of Keats in the discovery of the Pacific, all addenda must sound inept as "Silent upon a peak in Darien" has closed that chapter. How the discovery of gold, however, ruined the man who owned the land is caustically told in "El Dorado," about Sutter; so is the story of the pertinacity of Cyrus W. Field for his transoceanic cable and the passage of the sealed car which bore Lenin across Germany to Russia. Few probably remember that the Marseillaise was written in Strasbourg as a War Song for the Army of the Rhine and that Captain Rouget de Lisle would have died penniless if he had not been granted a pension by King Louis Philippe. There is strong Germanic sentiment in the sketch about Goethe and more interest in the composition of *The Messiah* and Handel. Licking the meringue off the historic pie is Mr. Zweig's prerogative. One can hardly say that he has extended intellectual boundaries, but the arousing of popular curiosity is a useful function. Is it a compliment to add that almost any of the sketches might have appeared in *The New Yorker?*

E. V. R. WYATT.

From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process. William Foxwell Albright. Johns Hopkins. $2.50.

IN THIS book the sometime Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem attempts to survey the development of man's idea of God and to relate it to its historical background. Moreover, since the accumulation of facts do not make history, he also proposes to analyze the patterns which emerge from these details.

His first chapter explains the methodology of ancient history and the history of its development and application during the past century. This brilliant sketch, which the author claims is unique in modern historical literature, involves art, archeology, philology, linguistics and the interpretation of both written documents and oral tradition. The authenticity of Israelite traditions is stressed

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together with the almost complete lack of literary fabrications in the ancient Near East.

"Toward an Organismic Philosophy of History" reviews and criticizes the work of Hegel, Comte, Ranke, Spengler, Wellhausen, Durkheim, Max Weber, Sorokin, Mandelbaum and others. Here Mr. Albright endorses a great part of Toynbee's "A Study of History," subjects Huntington's theory of climatic cycles to a severe but just criticism and ridicules the monstrosities of the Marxists. There is no essential but only a relative difference between scientific and historical knowledge. A culture represents an empirico-adaptive system all of whose elements are not necessarily linked in a causal-function or in Sorokin's "logico-meaningful" way. He also asserts his views are generally in agreement with those of neo-scholastic philosophy such as may be found in Ludovico D. Macnab's "El concepto escolastico de la historia" (Buenos Aires, 1940).

A very specialized summary of the pre-history and early cultures of the Near East incorporates the latest archeological researches, but assumes that the reader already possesses extensive historical knowledge. Primitive religion is presented by combining the views of such strange bedfellows as Lévy-Bruhl, Marett and Father Schmidt. Certainly no first-rate American ethnologist would agree that "the savage seldom or never thinks of the individual as having a distinct personality; all tends to be merged in collective or corporate personality, or is dissolved in factitious relationships between men, animals, plants, and cosmic or other inanimate objects and forces." The daring manner in which Mr. Albright attempts to trace these concepts in the evolution of historical religions may be contrasted to his admirable caution in warning against all schematizations of ancient Egyptian religion, even that of Sethe, or the uncritical acceptance of totemism in Egypt.

The author discusses the J, E and P documents of the Pentateuch and assigns the composition of Deuteronomy to the seventh century, although its materials probably reflect a true Mosaic atmosphere. Since years ago the Biblical Commission decided Moses was its author, the reviewer is curious to know what Catholic critics will think of these sections. On the other hand it is astonishing to read how archeology is verifying the truth of the Biblical narratives and, in general, the historical conclusions of this volume support the position of conservative orthodoxy. Moses was a monotheist who framed Israel's religious system, the Prophets inaugurated a reformation not a revolution, and the basic features of Christianity were not created by John or Paul but may be traced to the life of Jesus.

Since the author states his purpose is both philosophical and historical then, in order to avoid confusion, it must also be here emphasized that the methods and scope of scholastic philosophy lie beyond the contents of this book. Final decision on religious beliefs are beyond the rational empiricism of the historian and must be left to the Church and to the individual believer—according to the author.

THEODORE M. AVERY, JR.

Mind Through the Ages. Martin Stevers. Doubleday. $3.75.

THE AUTHOR, who has certainly read widely, but who has in many cases interpreted very badly, claims that with the new knowledge we have attained in biology, prehistory, history, psychology and sociology, we are now in a position as never before in human history, to build a really workable social and political world. In fact, if we do not seize our twentieth century opportunity to use our new and clear understandings of human nature for adjusting society accurately to man's characteristics and needs, we will be driven to "reconditioning" by the "whip of calamity." The foundation of our new understanding is "the linkage between the brute and the power of reasoning in the human mind." In attempting to explain how intelligence "struggled into being out of brute mentality," the author has written a great deal of nonsense. One wishes he had used the light science has shed to define at least the problem of mental evolution intelligently.

The trouble has been, he states, that man's intelligence has heretofore done little to shape his career—"brute nature" [cravings and emotions] has done much more. Evidence for this is presented in a review of history from its dawn up to the present and Hitler, wherein man is shown to be at the mercy of Nature as well as of his own human nature. As a solution many reforms are suggested—better distribution of wealth, more effective procedures in civil and criminal law, and especially an overhauling in the field of education. Which is all to the good, but one is a little puzzled at some of the specifications. For example, "Henry Ford . . . is the true road to better living. His career shows how to use the profit motive intelligently, instead of letting it misuse and defeat human need." Finally, the author, disregarding what science has actually revealed about mentality and the nature of genius, puts his ultimate hope for a better world in a mental evolution which "might well make this type of intuitive thinking [of genius], rare as it is today, the commonplace of tomorrow and broaden it until all men can apply it over all their living." Maybe, maybe not. *Quien sabe?* At best it looks like a long time to wait.

REGINA FLANNERY.

MISCELLANEOUS

Brazilian Sketches. Rudyard Kipling. Doubleday. $2.00.

THESE essays were copyrighted in 1927, but this is their first publication in America: seven sketches of Brazil; seven poems; 115 pages; a thoroughly attractive-looking book. It is not so much a travel book as it is straight *belles lettres*. The country of Brazil is not exactly the subject, nor is the author himself. There is a quality of recollection, a sorting out of human types and manners, a relating of new impressions of nature and things and feelings to many that have come before. Brazil is a hot country, and Kipling's sense of the tropics and of India is evident throughout. Kipling has described frequently with the very highest talent the British at empire-building in India, and all that earlier work of his is apparent through this. A dynamo and a railroad form the object of two sketches, not so much, it appears, because they typify Brazil or are unique to Brazil, but because they are in Brazil too. The physical immensity of the country, its overpowering fertility and unimaginable richness and productivity are approached obliquely, with the ever-present remembrance of India and England and an eminent life. And the ocean and ships are all along this country too.

Rudyard Kipling will be a bewildering figure in the history of literature. He was a genius. As a writer he seemed to range from low class and low brow to high class and the highest brow, and in every range he has left important works. In like manner, his thought, his politics, his sensitivities. "Brazilian Sketches" are highbrow, with a sophistication which arrives from experience and not

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decadence—at least it is hard to associate any ordinary type of decadence with Kipling. The writing is done in a highly developed and individual style, without peculiar grammar or sentence structure—rather the very opposite—but not simply either. The paragraphs give a feeling of confidence and maturity; they have figures and references related to a long and aware life in the world and not in "literature"; they have interest and contact with the reader in his non-reading life; and they have color. There is great cultivated artistry in the manner by which pictures and impressions and feelings are formed and unified from material which does not seem selected or ordered according to a preconceived logic. The poems introducing each chapter typify the book and its peculiar impression of "Road to Mandalay" uncomplicatedness along with a subtle accumulation of unexpected observations and recollections and overtones which, together, make comprehensible Kipling's eminence in English letters.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

SCIENCE

For Daughters and Mothers. Valeria Parker, M.D. Bobbs. $1.50.

FOR MANY years Dr. Parker has been a lecturer on sex education and social hygiene. That she is now Honorary President of the National Council of Women attests her competence in this, her special field. Her book has the blessing of Professor Bigelow and of the editor of *Social Hygiene*. I have long admired her generous enthusiasm and her competence. Here she has compressed into 138 pages almost more sex education than the mind is prepared to digest. Her chapter headings are Childhood, New Horizons and New Outlooks, The Chain of Life, New Bodies, "Having a Good Time," Looking toward Romance, "How Do You Know You're in Love?" Working Plans, Women of Tomorrow, The Great Adventure.

Sex education has broadened since the three doctors, Morrow, Bigelow and Balliett, started it rolling. In those days that child was lucky who was introduced to the golden mysteries of life by anyone who had the faintest notion of the glories of sex. Even today sex, most vivid expression of the biological urge, the curiosity and the idealistic enthusiasm of youth, is something the average male adult is secretly, if not openly, ashamed of. Yet wise parents are at it, establishing between themselves and their children a confidence which, as a basic source of social sanity, can be provided as well by no one else. And the younger teachers, in spite of the "educational mastodons," are doing their part, facing the teaching of sex frankly in their courses, social, physiological, historical, artistic, etc.

This book, which begins with the sentence, "To woman alone is it given to nurture consciously, to bear, to rear a being with an immortal soul," discusses adolescence, sex, the genito-infectious diseases and allied topics in as balanced, as elevated and as discreet a manner as may be. This reviewer sincerely approves it as sound doctrine for the guidance of mothers. Whether they should give it to their daughters or read it to them or interpret it, is for the mother to judge. In any event most if not all of the information and inspiration herein contained is needed by the adolescent girl and I do not know where the mother can more readily find it in the reverential form in which she might be happy to transmit it.

E. L. KEYES.

THEATRE

Theatre for Tomorrow. Edited by Emmet Lavery. Longmans. $3.00.

THIS VOLUME contains three plays on Catholic subjects: "Kamiano" by Emmet Lavery and Grace Murphy, "Savonarola" by Urban Nagle, O.P., and "Who Ride on White Horses" by Richard Breen and Harry Schnibbe. In addition the book contains an outline of the Catholic tradition in drama, and a selected list of Catholic plays. Aside from the purely Catholic point of view, the most interesting thing in the volume is "Kamiano," a play taken by Mr. Lavery from a play by Grace Murphy entitled "Kamaaina." How much is Mr. Lavery's and how much Miss Murphy's it is of course impossible to judge, but the skillful construction doesn't bear the mark of a tyro, and a good deal of the dialogue has the poetic utterance combined with the dramatic bite that has characterized Mr. Lavery's other plays. "Kamiano," which deals with the life of Father Damien, ought to receive professional production, and was to have received it in France, a consummation prevented by the outbreak of the War. "Kamiano" has rare spiritual beauty, and yet is admirable fitted for the living theatre. It would of course have no wide audience, but all, whether Catholics or not, who love what is best in the theatre would want to see it. Here if ever is a work deserving the attention of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. "Kamiano" is a play which should be underwritten, for its presentation of the Hero of Molokai is one which might well bring thousands to an interest in the Faith. It is a shame that a play like this should be relegated to the library shelves through the neglect of those who ought to support it. If we are ever to have a Catholic drama, the authorities of the Church must show a practical interest in it.

Father Urban's "Savonarola" gives a true picture of the Florentine reformer, and is well written, but it is long in some of its scenes and lacks the dramatic accent of the Lavery-Murphy play. The same is true of "Who Ride on White Horses," a drama on the life of Edmund Campion, which was given last season at the Heckscher Theatre, New York, by the Mimes and Mummers of Fordham University, with Robert Speaight in the part of Campion. But both plays are certainly worthy of Catholic support and of production in schools and colleges. "Theatre for Tomorrow" is a book which should be on the shelves of every Catholic institution, as well in the private libraries of all who are interested in the theatre. The concluding list of Catholic plays is also a most welcome addition, and a useful one.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

BRIEFERS

Crossword Puzzle Dictionary. Andrew Swanfeldt. Crowell. $1.49.

A TIME-AND-PATIENCE-SAVING book to give the member of the family who tends to plague you with those endless and otherwise unanswerable descendants of "extinct Australian bird" or "Egyptian god of the sun."

They Left the Land. Naomi Jacob. Macmillan. $2.50.

SOLIDLY built narrative of three generations of Yorkshiremen which rarely reaches psychological depths or emotional heights. But London is the scene of much of the important action; there the family deteriorates. Some of the characters finally do get back to the land.

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The Inner Forum

THIS CHRISTMAS there will be a number of good opportunities for radio listeners to hear Catholic radio programs from many points. The number of international broadcasts continues to shrink; unlike other years, there are no prospects of broadcasts from such appropriate sources as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, from St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, from the village of Oberndorf where the parish organist once composed "Silent Night." There are two important broadcasts from Vatican City, however. On Sunday, December 22, the Columbia network will carry a program by the Sistine Chapel Choir from 1 to 1:30 P.M., Eastern Standard Time. On Christmas Day the National Broadcasting Company Red Network from 1 to 1:30 P.M. will send out a half hour of church music from the historic basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, where five small wooden planks reputed to be from the manger of Bethlehem are guarded as relics.

Here in this country a Midnight Mass celebrated by Archbishop Spellman at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York will be broadcast over the Mutual Broadcasting System. On the same day station WMCA and the Intercity Network will from 4:15 to 4:45 P.M. send out the Ave Maria Hour, which in this case will be devoted to the Nativity. The same station will broadcast from the Bowery in New York a sermon by Father Gannon of Fordham and the Mass at Holy Name Church. From 12 noon to 12:15 over the NBC blue network Bishop John F. O'Hara will deliver a sermon on peace for the nation's soldiers, sailors and airmen.

The Catholic Hour's Christmas program, December 22 at 6 P.M., will have Msgr. Sheen preach the sermon (National Broadcasting System). The seminarians' choir of St. Cyril and Methodius' Seminary of Orchard Lake, Mich., from 2 to 2:30 P.M. December 21, will broadcast over the Columbia Network a program that will include Gregorian Chant, the Ave Maria and Polish Christmas Carols. Christmas Carols at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York will be heard over station WMCA on Christmas Eve from 11:30 until midnight.

CONTRIBUTORS

Theodore MAYNARD'S last book is his life of Queen Elizabeth, published this fall.
Rev. Giles STAAB, O.F.M.Cap., is stationed at St. Fidelis Seminary, Herman, N. Y.
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Jerome MELLQUIST is an art critic whose book, "Camera to Palette," is to be published next spring.
John C. CORT of the ACTU is rusticating in Rhode Island.
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Stephen BALDANZA teaches at Pennsylvania State College.
Harry SYLVESTER is just back in the East from Santa Fe.
OLIVE B. WHITE'S "Late Harvest" was published this autumn.
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